2.

Poetical Reflections

ON A LATE

POEM

ENTITULED,

Abſalom and Achitophel.

By a Perſon of Honour.

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TO THE

READER.

IF ever any thing, call'd a *Poem*, deſerv'd a ſevere Reflection, that of *Abſalom* and *Achitophel* may juſtly contract it. For tho' Lines can never be purg'd from the droſs and filth they would throw on others (there being no retraction that can expiate the conveying of perſons to an unjuſt and publick reproach); yet the cleanſing of their fames from a deſign'd pollution, may well become a more ingenious Pen than the Author of theſe few reflections will preſume to challenge.

To epitomize which ſcandalous Phamphlet (unworthy the denomination of *Poeſy*) no eye can inſpect it without a prodigious amazement; the abuſes being ſo groſs and deliberate, that it ſeems rather a Capital or National Libel, than perſonal expoſures, in order to an infamous detraction. For how does he character the King, but as a broad figure of ſcandalous inclinations, or contriv'd unto ſuch irregularities, as renders him rather the property of Paraſites and Vice, than ſuitable to the accompliſhment of ſo excellent a Prince? Nay, he forces on King *David* ſuch a Royal reſemblance, that he darkens

his ſanctity in ſpite of illuminations from Holy Writ.

Next (to take as near our King as he could) he calumniates the Duke of *Monmouth* with that height of impudence, that his Senſe is far blacker than his Ink, expoſing him to all the cenſures that a Murderer, a Traytor, or what a Subject of moſt ambitious evil can poſſibly comprehend: and it is ſome wonder, that his Lines alſo had not hang'd him on a Tree, to make the intended *Abſalom* more compleat.

As to my Lord *Shaftsbury* (in his colluſive *Achitophel*), what does he other than exceed Malice it ſelf? or that the more prudent deſerts of that Peer were to be ſo impeach'd before-hand by his impious Poem, as that he might be granted more emphatically condign of the Hangman's Ax; And which his Muſe does in effect take upon her to haſten.

And if the ſeaſon be well obſerv'd, when this Adulterate Poem was ſpread, it will be found purpoſely divulg'd near the time when this Lord, with his other Noble Partner, were to be brought to their Tryals. And I ſuppoſe this Poet thought himſelf enough aſſur'd of their condemnation; at leaſt, that his *Genius* had not otherwiſe ventur'd to have trampled on perſons of ſuch eminent Abilities, and Intereſt in the Nation. A conſideration, I confeſs, incited my Pen (its preceding reſpect being paid to the Duke of *Monmouth*) to vindicate their Reputations where I thought it due.

And

And ſome are not a little miſtaken in their judgments of perſons, if any Kingdom has at this time Two men of their Dignity, of more extraordinary Underſtandings: Which may (if well conſider'd) be ſome inducement to their future preſervation and eſteem. As I have endeavour'd chiefly to clear their abuſe, ſo I have paſs'd divers conſiderable perſons, under as malign inclinations of this Author's; conceiving, that what I have ſaid for the Principals, may remove ſuch ſmaller prejudices as are on the value of others on the ſame concern.

His moſt ſelect and pecuniary Favourites, I have but barely touch'd, in reſpect his praiſe includes a concomitant reprehenſion, if well apprehended. Beſides, I was unwilling to diſcourage any, that for the future may deſire to be admir'd by him according to their liberality. A method, that perhaps may in time ſet up ſome Merchants of *Pernaſſus*, where the *Indies* of Fame ſeem lately diſcover'd, and may be purchas'd *per Centum*, according to modern example.

As to the Character of *Amiel*, I confeſs my Lines are ſomething pointed, the one reaſon being, that it alludes much to a manner of expreſſion of this Writer's, as may be ſeen by the marginal Notes; and a ſecond will be ſoon allowed. The figure of *Amiel* has been ſo ſqueez'd into Paint, that his ſoul is ſeen in ſpite of the Varniſh.

And none will deny, but it is as eaſie to ſend Truth backward, as it is to ſpur Falſities egregiouſly forward, and might have caus'd any Aſſe, as knowing as *Balaam*'s, to have rebuk'd ſuch a Poet as will needs

prophecy

prophecy againſt the ſenſe of Heaven and Men. But I have enough of this *Amiell*, as well as of his Muſe, unleſs that by his means it occaſions a further account. And for what is mine here, It will at worſt contract cenſure, in reſpect it is a brief reflection on a very large Libel. And tho' I believe it did not coſt (tho' that be not offer'd for an excuſe) the tenth part of the time of the other. As to my Preface, I was willing that he ſhould find, that this ſmaller work has ſome Noſe.--- Tho' I am no more bound to have my Face known by it, than he is willing to obſcure his by a Nameleſs Preamble.

Poetical Reflections

ON A

POEM,

CALLED

Abſolon and Achitophel.

WHen late Protectorſhip was Canon-Proof,
And *Cap-a-pe* had ſeiz'd on *Whitehall*-Roof.
And next, on *Iſraelites* durſt look ſo big,
That *Tory-like*, it lov'd not much the *Whigg*:
A Poet there ſtarts up, of wondrous Fame;
Whether *Scribe* or *Phariſee*, his Race doth name,
Or more t'intrigue the Metaphor of Man,
Got on a Muſe by *Father-Publican:* A Committee-Man.
For 'tis not harder much, if we tax Nature,
That Lines ſhould give a Poet ſuch a Feature;
Than that his Verſe a *Hero* ſhould us ſhow, Sir *Denzill Hollis* ſeeks *annus mirabilis.*
Produc'd by ſuch a Feat, as famous too.
His Mingle ſuch, what Man preſumes to think,
But he can Figures daub with Pen and Ink.
A Grace our mighty *Nimrod* late beheld,

When he within the Royal Palace dwell'd,
And saw 'twas of import if Lines could bring
His Greatness from *Usurper*, to be King:
Or varnish so his Praise, that little odds
Should seem 'twixt him, and such called Earthly Gods.
And tho no Wit can Royal Blood infuse,
No more than melt a Mother to a Muse:
Yet much a certain Poet undertook,
That Men and Manners deals in without-Book.
And might not more to Gospel-Truth belong,
Than he (if Christened) does by name of *John*.
This Poet, who that time much squanderd thought,
Of which some might bring Coyn, whilst some none (brought,
As Men that hold their Brains of powerful sense,
Will least on Poet's Tales bestow their pence,
Tho he such Dispensations to endear,
Had notch'd his Sconce just level with his Ear.
An Emblem in these days of much import,
When Crop-ear'd Wits had such a Modish Court.
Tho some from after-deeds much fear the Fate,
That such a Muse may for its Lugs create.
As Stars may without Pillories dispence,
To slit some Ears for Forgeries of sense,
Which Princes, Nobles, and the Fame of Men,
Sought to bespatter by a worthless Pen.
But leaving this to Circumstances fit,
With what thence spreads this Renegado-wit.
We'll tell you how his Court he now doth make,
And what choice Things and Persons he doth take,
That Lines for Guinnys might more liquorish speak.

See his Poem on *Cromwel.*

To

To heigten which we'll to his Muſe advance,
Which late diſcover'd its *Judaick* Trance:
Where *Abſalon*'s in *Engliſh* Colours di'd,
That in a Duke, a Traitor might be ſpi'd.
Or Heaven on him did Graces ſo beſtow,
As only could confer their Pageant Show;
Giving his Glories no more faſt Renown,
Than with more Honour to be taken down:
Like Victimes by ſome Sacrificers dreſt,
Muſt fall adorn'd, which then they pity leaſt.
But fear not *Monmouth*, if a Libel's quill,
Would dregs of Venom on thy Vertue ſpill;
Since no deſert ſo ſmoothly is convey'd,
As next it's Fame, no canker'd Patch is laid;
Thou didſt no Honour ſeek, but what's thy due,
And ſuch Heaven bids thee not relinquiſh too.
Whilſt it's Impreſſions ſo oblig'd thy Task,
As leave from Earth thy Soul declin'd to ask.
If this thy Error were, what Influ'nce can
Excuſe the Duty of more wilfull Man;
With ſuch whoſe Figures ſhew that ſquinting Paint,
Whence peeps a Mungril *Babyloniſh Saint*.
Thy Soul's Religion's Prop, and Native Grace,
Rome, (fears its onſets) looking on the place;
What Altitude can more exalt thy Praiſe,
Tho beſt Devotion ſhould thy Trophies raiſe,
And 'tis perhaps from thy Diviner Bliſs,
That ſome may fear their Souls are ſeen amiſs.
As what ſo high does Emulation mount,
As Greatneſs when ſurpaſs'd on Heaven's Account;

And

And if th' Ambition would in this excel,
'Twas but to be more great in doing well;
And muſt rebate the worſt that Fates intend,
whilſt Heaven and *England* is at once thy Friend.
This juſt *Encomium*, tho too brief it be
To repreſent thy leaſt Epitome;
And but unto thy larger Figure joyn'd,
As ſmall proportions are from great deſign'd;
Tho where a line one worth of thine can ſpeak,
It does alone, a Poem's Greatneſs make;
Leaving this *Hero* to his ſpotleſs Fame,
(As who beſides this Wretch will it blaſpheme)
Or in a Libels Allegorick way,
Men falſely figur'd, to the world convey,
Libels the enormous Forgery of ſenſe,
Stamp'd on the brow of human Impudence;
The blackeſt wound of Merit, and the Dart,
That ſecret Envy points againſt Deſert.
The luſt of Hatred pander'd to the Eye
T'allure the World's debauching by a Lie.
Th'rancrous Favourite's maſquerading Guilt,
Imbitt'ring venom where he'd have it ſpilt.
The Courts depreſſion in a fulſom Praiſe;
A Teſt it's *Ignoramus* worſt conveys,
A lump of Falſhood's Malice does diſperſe,
Or Toad when crawling on the Feet of Verſe.
Fame's impious Hireling and mean Reward,
The Knave that in his Lines turns up his Card,
Who, tho no Rabby, thought in Hebrew wit,
He forc'd Alluſions can cloſly fit.

To *Jews* or *Engliſh*, much unknown before,
He made a *Talmud* on his Muſes ſcore;
Though hop'd few Criticks will its *Genius* carp,
So purely Metaphors King *David*'s Harp,
And by a ſoft Encomium, near at hand,
Shews *Bathſheba* Embrac'd throughout the Land.
But this Judaick Paraphraſtick Sport
We'll leave unto the ridling Smile of Court.
Good Heav'n! What timeful Pains can Rhymers take,
When they'd for Crowds of Men much Penplot make?
Which long-Beak'd Tales and filch'd Alluſions brings,
As much like Truth, as 'tis the Woodcock ſings.
What elſe could move this Poet to purloin
So many *Jews*, to pleaſe the *Engliſh* Swine?
Or was it that his Brains might next diſpenſe
To adapt himſelf a Royal Evidence?
Or that he'd find for *Dugdale*'s Waſh ſome Spell,
In ſtead of once more dipp'd in *Winifred*'s Well;
And ope his Budget, like *Pandora*'s Box,
Whence Overt-acts more *Proteſtants* ſhould Pox,
Which might the Joyner's Ghoſt provoke to riſe,
And fright ſuch Tales with other *Popiſh* Lies?
But *Starr's* or *Ignoramus*'s may not give
Thoſe Swearers longer ſwinge by Oaths to live.
A Providence much *Engliſh* Good protects,
And ſends Teſtees to Trade for new Effects;
Which none of the Long-Robe, 'tis hop'd, can aid,
So well by Oaths the Devil's already paid;

And moſt ſuppoſe, if e're both Plots can die,
Or eat up one anothers Perjury,
'Twou'd *Pluto* ſtrangely poſe to find a Third,
Sould he in his a *Popiſh* Legion Lard.
A Policy ſome Poems much embrace,
As is diſcern'd in *Shaftsbury*'s Great Caſe;
Where Verſe ſo vile an Obloquy betray,
As for a Statiſt-*Jew* they'd him convey.
Tho hard it is to underſtand what Spell
Can conjure up in him *Achitophel*,
Or tax this Peer with an Abuſed Senſe
Of his ſo deep and apt Intelligence:
A Promptitude by which the Nation's ſhown
To be in Thought concurrent with his own.
Shaftsbury! A Soul that Nature did impart
To raiſe her Wonder in a Brain and Heart;
Or that in him produc'd, the World might know,
She others did with drooping Thought beſtow.
As in Mans moſt perſpicuous Soul, we find
The neareſt Draught of her Internal Mind,
Tho it appears her higheſt Act of State,
When Human Conducts ſhe does moſt compleat,
And place them ſo, for Mankinds good, that they
Are fit to Guide, where others miſs their Way;
It being in Worldly Politiques leſs Great
To be a Law-maker, than Preſerve a State.
In Publick Dangers Laws are unſecure,
As ſtrongeſt Anchors can't all VVinds endure;
Though 'tis in Exigents the wiſeſt Eaſe
To know who beſt can ply when Storms encreaſe;
VVhilſt other Proſpects, by miſtaking Fate,
Through wrong Preventions, more its Bad dilate.

VVhence

Whence ſome their Counter-Politicks extend.
To ruine ſuch can Evils beſt amend.
A Thwarting *Genius*, which our Nation more
Than all its head-ſtrong Evils does deplore;
And ſhews what violent Movements ſuch inform,
That where a Calm ſhould be, they force a Storm;
As if their Safety chiefly they muſt prize
In being rid of Men eſteem'd more Wiſe.
To this Great, Little Man, we'll T'other joyn,
Held Sufferers by one Tripartite Deſign.
As from a Cubick Power, or Three-fold Might,
Roots much expand, as Authors prove aright;
But of ſuch Managements we'll little ſay,
Or ſhamm'd Intrigues, for Fame left to convey;
Which may by peeping through a Gown-mans Sleeve,
Tell ſuch grave Tales, Men cannot well believe:
With what for Plots and Trials has been done,
As Whores depos'd, before away they run;
All which was well diſcern'd by numerous Senſe,
Before the Doctor's py'd Intelligence,
Who, with ſome Motley Lawyers, took much care
To gain the *Caput* of this Knowing Peer;
When after ſo much Noiſe, and nothing prov'd,
Heaven thank'd, to Freedom he's at laſt remov'd,
Leaving a Low-Bridge *Cerberus* to try
In what Clerks Pate his monſtrous Fee does lie;
Or by the help of *Tory-Roger* tell
How Sacred Gain-Prerogativ'd ſhould ſpell.
But theſe are Thoughts may fit ſome Penſive Skulls,
Or Men concern'd to bait their ſeveral Bulls;

Whilſt

Whilſt on this Peer we muſt ſome Lines beſtow,
Tho more he merits than beſt Verſe can ſhow:
Great in his Name, but greater in his Parts,
Judgment ſublim'd, with all its ſtrong Deſerts;
A Senſe above Occaſions quick ſurprize,
That he no Study needs to make him Wiſe,
Or labour'd Thoughts, that trains of Sinews knit,
His Judgment always twin'd unto his Wit;
That from his clear Diſcuſſions Men may know
He does to wonder other Brains out-do.
VVhilſt they for Notions ſearch they can't com-
His *Genius* fitly ſtands prepar'd to act. (pact,
Admir'd of Man, that in thy Senſe alone
So ready doſt exalt high Reaſon's Throne;
That Men abate Reſentments to expect
Thou mayſt riſe Greater, having paſt Neglect.
A Sacred Method Kings receive from Heaven,
That ſtill does Cheriſh, when it has Forgiven;
Which from our Princes Soul ſo largely flows,
That Mercy's Channel with his Greatneſs goes.
No Arbitrary Whiſpers him can guide
To ſwell his Rule beyond its genuine Tide:
Whilſt other Kings their rugged Scepters ſee
Eclips'd in his more ſoft Felicity;
Whoſe Goodneſs can all Streſs of State remove,
So fitly own'd the Subjects Fear and Love.
My Verſe might here diſcharge its haſty Flight,
As Pencils that attempt Immortal Heighth
Droop in the Colours ſhould convey its Light,
Did not this Poet's Lines upon me call
For ſome Reflexions on a Lower Fall;

Where

Where he by Rhyming, a *Judaick* Sham,
Obtrudes for *Iſraelites* ſome Seeds of *Cham.*
And this Inſpexion needs no further go
Than where his Pen does moſt Indulgent ſhow:
And 'tis no wonder if his *Types* of Senſe
Should ſtroke ſuch *Figures* as give down their Pence;
A Crime for which ſome Poets Lines ſo ſtretch,
As on themſelves they Metaphor *Jack Ketch.*
Tho ſmall the Varniſh is to Humane Name,
Where Cogging Meaſures rob the truth of Fame.
And more to do his skew'd *Encomiums* right,
Some Perſons ſpeak by him their motly Sight:
Or much like *Hudibras,* on Wits pretence,
Some Lines for Rhyme, and ſome to gingle Senſe.
Who elſe would *Adriel, Jotham, Huſhai,* fit,
With loathed *Amiell,* for a Court of VVit?
For, as Men Squares of Circles hardly find,
Some think theſe Meaſures are as odly joyn'd.
VVhat elſe could *Adriell's* ſharpneſs more abuſe,
Than headlong dubb'd, to own himſelf a Muſe,
Unleſs to ſpread Poetick Honours ſo
As ſhould a Muſe give each St. *George's* Show?
A Mode of Glory might *Parnaſſus* fit,
Tho our Sage Prince knows few he'd Knight for VVit.
And thus this Freak is left upon the File,
Or as 'tis written in this Poet's Stile.
Next, as in Courſe, to *Jotham* we'll deſcend,
Thoughtful it ſeems which Side he'll next be-friend,
As thinking Brains can caper to and fro,
Before they jump into the Box they'd go.

And 'tis a moody Age, as many gueſs,
When ſome with buſie Fears ſtill forward preſs;
As 'tis Ambitions oft-deluding Cheat
To tempt Mens aims, ſecureleſs of defeat.
Huſhai the Compaſs of th' *Exchequer* guides,
Propenſe enough unto the North beſides:
As what can ſteady Stations more allure,
Than ſuch, a Princely Bed does firſt ſecure?
Whoſe Part none are ſo ignorant to ask,
And does no leſs employ his Ends and Task.
But quitting theſe, we muſt for Proſpect paſs
To gaping *Amiell*, as reflects our Glaſs.
The *Him* indeed of his own * Weſtern Dome,
So near his praiſeful Poet Senſe may come:
For * *Amiell*, *Amiell*, who cannot endite
Of his *Thin* Value won't diſdain to write?
The very *Him* with Gown and Mace did rule
The *Sanedrim*, when guided by a Fool.
The *Him* that did both Senſe and Reaſon ſhift,
That he to gainful Place himſelf might lift.
The very *Him* that did adjuſt the Seed
Of ſuch as did their Votes for Money breed.
The Mighty *Him* that frothy Notions vents,
In hope to turn them into Preſidents.
The *Him* of *Hims*, although in Judgment ſmall,
That fain would be the biggeſt at *Whitehall*.
The *He* that does for Juſtice Coin poſtpone,
As on Account may be hereafter ſhown.
If this plain *Engliſh* be, 'tis far from Trick,
Though ſome Lines gall, where others fawning lick;
Which fits thy Poet, *Amiell*, for thy Smiles,
If once more paid to blaze thy hated Toils.

* *See his*, p. 27.

* *See his*, p. 28.

Of

Of Things and Perſons might be added more,
Without Intelligence from Forreign Shore,
Or what Deſigns Ambaſſadors contrive,
Or how the Faithleſs *French* their Compaſs guide:
But Lines the buſie World too much ſupply,
Beſides th' Effects of evil Poetry,
Which much to *Tory*-Writers ſome aſcribe,
Though hop'd no Furies of the *Whiggiſh* Tribe
Will on their Backs ſuch Lines or Shapes convey,
To burn with Pope, on Great *November*'s Day.

FINIS.